

Open Government Initiative

VA's Plan for Open Government



On January 21, 2009, President Obama signed a [Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government](#), as his first executive action, ushering in a new era of open and accountable Government. In December 2009, the Administration issued an [Open Government Directive](#) that instructed every Government agency to open its doors and its data to the American public.

The Open Government Initiative is based on three core values:

- 1) **Transparency:** The Government should provide its citizens with information about what their government is doing so that government can be held accountable.
- 2) **Participation:** The Government should actively solicit expertise from outside Washington so that it makes policies with the benefit of the best information.
- 3) **Collaboration:** Government officials should work together with one another and with citizens as part of doing their job of solving national problems.

As the VA transforms itself into the 21st century and complies with the requirements set forth under the Open Government Initiative, significant strides are being made to enhance our application of the openness principles referenced above. On April 7, 2010, after soliciting ideas from the public, the [VA Open Government Plan](#) was released and is currently being implemented in order to create a more transparent, participatory, and collaborative agency.

- [View the VA Self Assessment Report](#)
- [View the Published VA FOIA Annual Reports](#)
- [View the Current VA Information Technology Projects](#)

Training Topic

Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA)

▪ What is ORCA?

[ORCA](#) is an Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) E-Government initiative designed to replace the paper-based Representations & Certifications (Reps & Certs) process. ORCA is a web-based system that centralizes and standardizes the collection, storage and viewing of many of the [Federal Acquisition Regulations \(FAR\)](#) required representations and certifications previously found in solicitations. In addition, rather than receiving and reviewing paper submissions, Government contracting officials can access ORCA and review a firm's information online as a part of the proposal evaluation process, which reduces the administrative burden on vendors to submit the same paper-based representations and certifications repeatedly for various solicitations. Please note that ORCA records are considered public information, so anyone with access to the internet, and knows a registrant's DUNS number, can search the archives to view an ORCA record. Also registration in ORCA does not completely replace the paper-based process, so please be sure to read a solicitation carefully when responding.

▪ Who needs to register in ORCA?

A firm must be registered in ORCA if the solicitation that they are responding to requires an active registration in [Central Contractor Registration \(CCR\)](#). Also, a firm's ORCA registration status should be updated whenever necessary, but at least annually, to ensure information is kept current, accurate, and complete.

▪ What is the difference between CCR and ORCA, and why does a contractor have to register in both systems?

CCR is the primary vendor database for the U.S. Federal Government. Since October 1, 2003, it is federally mandated that any business wishing to do business with the Federal Government under a FAR-based contract must be registered in CCR before being awarded a contract. In addition, vendors must maintain their CCR records annually.

On the other hand, ORCA replaces most of the paper based Representations and Certifications (Reps and Certs) in solicitations with an Internet application.

CCR and ORCA are complementary systems. ORCA reuses data pulled from CCR and pre-populates many of the required Representations and Certifications. Then, the vendor completes the remaining Reps and Certs with the understanding that with each solicitation they are certifying to current, accurate and complete information.

- View the [ORCA Handbook](#)
- If you need any help with ORCA, please contact your local [Procurement Technical Assistance Center \(PTAC\)](#).

News You Can Use

VA Acquisition Academy

In Fall 2008, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Acquisitions and Logistics (OA&L) opened the [VA Acquisition Academy \(VAAA\)](#) in Frederick, Maryland in order to respond to the growing challenges facing the VA acquisition workforce. The VAAA is dedicated to developing professionals who are the trusted business advisors capable of providing innovative acquisition solutions that serve veterans and taxpayers. With the downsizing from the last decade and the loss of institutional knowledge resulting from baby-boomer retirements, the acquisition workforce has been strained to keep pace with the increased amount of and complexities associated with outsourced work in support of the VA mission. In addition, oversight of the acquisition function across the entire Federal Government has grown dramatically in recent years. All of this, combined with recent mandates by the [Office of Federal Procurement Policy \(OFPP\)](#), as implemented by the [Federal Acquisition Institute](#), to meet required certification standards for the acquisition workforce, prompted the VA to take action to create the VAAA.

- [Learn More About the VA Acquisition Academy](#)

VA FSS Working for You

Tip of the Month

Is your firm's VA FSS pricelist updated in GSA Advantage?

[GSA Advantage!](#) is an online catalog of products and services that are available for procurement under VA/GSA FSS contracts. Regardless the type of products or services a firm may offer, all VA/GSA FSS contractors (except contractors under 651B Pharmaceutical schedule) are required to upload their pricing to GSA Advantage, and updated accordingly with any approved modification request. Besides being a contractual requirement under clause I-FSS-597, Electronic Commerce, GSA Advantage provides market exposure. According to GSA, over one million customers a week visit the GSA Advantage website and place over 30,000 orders per week.

- [GSA Advantage! Vendor Start-Up Kit \(General Instructions\)](#)
- [The Vendor Support Center Website](#)
- [GSA Advantage Customer Assistance Website](#)

National News

Recent Emergency & Disaster Declarations

Under the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program, state and local Government entities may purchase a variety of products and services from contracts awarded under FSS contracts to facilitate recovery from a major disaster, terrorism, or nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological attack. As such, there were 12 declarations by the President during the month of May 2010, which can be seen below.

- [Frequently Asked Questions About the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program](#)

Major Disaster Declarations (May 2010)

Number	Date	State	Disaster Type
1908	5/03	Alabama	Severe Storms
1909	5/04	Tennessee	Severe Storms
1910	5/06	Maryland	Severe Winter Storm
1911	5/07	California	Earthquake
1912	5/11	Kentucky	Severe Storms
1913	5/12	New Hampshire	Severe Storms and Flooding
1914	5/13	South Dakota	Severe Winter Storm
1915	5/13	South Dakota	Flooding
1916	5/14	Mississippi	Severe Storms
1917	5/24	Oklahoma	Severe Storms

Emergency Declarations (May 2010)

Number	Date	State	Title
3312	5/03	Massachusetts	Water Main Break

Fire Management Assistance Declarations (May 2010)

Number	Date	State	Incident
2842	5/24	New Mexico	Cabazon Fire

Upcoming VA NAC FSS Customer Training

The Federal Supply Schedule Service of the VA National Acquisition Center (NAC) will be conducting Webinar Training Sessions on the General Overview of the FSS program, the benefits for Customers, as well as discussions on the best way to use the contract vehicle for maximum benefit. This course is designed to provide contracting officers and other purchasing officials within the Government an in-depth understanding of the following:

- 1) How the Federal Supply Schedule program works
- 2) Benefits of using FSS Schedules
- 3) How to place orders against FSS contracts, including:
 - FAR 8.405-1 Ordering Procedures for Supplies, and Services Not Requiring a Statement of Work
 - FAR 8.405-2 Ordering Procedures for Services Requiring a Statement of Work
 - Compliance Check Requirements
 - Priorities of Use of Government Supply Sources
 - Open Market Waiver Request Process
 - Competition Requirements
- 4) Electronic Tools

The VA NAC FSS Customer Training is mandatory and the associated resources have been developed specifically for VHA facilities to address the training needs identified by the Office of the Inspector General Report No. 08-01519-172, which was issued on July 2, 2009. Please note that the Customer Training is **ONLY APPLICABLE TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

In order to register for one of the VA NAC FSS training classes, please perform the following:

- 1) Go to the [Register Online](#) link on the ARC eCMS page.
- 2) Enter your VA Network User Name (including domain) and Password and Click 'OK'.
- 3) On the Registration Home page, fill in your email address and organization (if not pre-populated).
- 4) From the Event Type dropdown list, select 'Training'.
- 5) From the Event dropdown list, select the desired VA NAC FSS Training class.
NOTE: Only register for 1 class. (The system will indicate how many spaces are available).
- 6) Click on 'Submit.'

MEETING/WEBINAR SCHEDULE

June 2010

- June 2nd – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time
- June 9th – 8:30am to 1:30pm Pacific Time (11:30am to 4:30pm Eastern Time)
- June 16th – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time
- June 23rd – 8:30am to 1:30pm Pacific Time (11:30am to 4:30pm Eastern Time)
- June 30th – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time

July 2010

- July 14th – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time
- July 21st – 8:30am to 1:30pm Pacific Time (11:30am to 4:30pm Eastern Time)
- July 28th – 8:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time

August 2010

- Aug. 4th – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time
- Aug. 11th – 8:30am to 1:30pm Pacific Time (11:30am to 4:30pm Eastern Time)
- Aug 18th – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time
- Aug. 25th – 8:30am to 1:30pm Pacific Time (11:30am to 4:30pm Eastern Time)

September 2010

- Sept. 1st – 9:30am to 2:30pm Eastern Time

** Telephone & Web Conference Login Info**

Meeting Title: VA NAC FSS Customer Training

To access the audio & web conference follow the steps below:

- 1) Computer Login Information: Click on the link below
<https://www.livemeeting.com/cc/vaiorooms/join?id=WQB69Q&role=attend&pw=C%3Ejj%28%252>
- 2) Click on "Join"
- 3) Telephone Login Information: Dial telephone number (800)767-1750 and enter access code 21163

If you have any questions or problems registering, please contact Ms. Veronica Hazen at Veronica.Hazen@va.gov.

Recently Awarded FSS Contracts (May 2010)

Pharmaceutical, Dental, Patient Mobility, & X-Ray:

- Actelion Pharmaceuticals: V797P-5160B (Small Pharmaceutical Business)
- Precision Dose, Inc.: V797P-5166B (Small Pharmaceutical Business)
- Vernacare, Inc.: V797P-3204M (Large Patient Mobility Business)

Medical/Surgical Equipment:

- Beatty Marketing & Sales, LLC: V797P-4288B (Small Med/Surg Business)
- eVent Medical: V797P-4289B (Small, 8(A) Med/Surg Business)
- International Rehabilitative Sciences, Inc. DBA R.S. Medical: V797P-4291B (Large Med/Surg Business)
- DJO, LLC: V797P-4283B (Large Med/Surg Business)
- Canon U.S.A., Inc.: V797P-4292B (Large Med/Surg Business)
- ScottCare Corporation: V797P-4295B (Small Med/Surg Business)

In order to obtain pricing information for all of the companies referenced above, please review the [NAC Contract Catalog Search Tool \(CCST\)](#) or [GSA E-Library](#). If you have any questions/concerns or would like to learn more about a specific topic and/or issue, please feel free to contact the FSS helpdesk by phone at (708)786-7737 and/or by e-mail at helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov.